

THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL IN 2021: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

JANUARY

2022

ANNUAL REVIEW NO: 4



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MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

As in the previous year, in 2021 the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) held its sessions virtually. One exception was the session of the PSC marking the 1000th meeting held on 25 May 2021, which took place using a hybrid format. Unlike the previous year when COVID19 measures froze all PSC activities other than those to be carried out virtually, in 2021 the PSC resumed undertaking activities (other than its meetings) that require in person engagement by members of the PSC. It thus held a retreat and its annual high-level seminar in person. Similarly, the PSC also undertook a number of field missions during the year.

In 2021, the PSC held sessions at all the three levels: Permanent Representatives, Ministers and Heads of State and Government. The number of meetings at the level of ministers and Heads of State and Government has shown marked increase compared to the past few years. Ten sessions of the PSC were held at a ministerial level, making 2021 the year with the highest number of ministerial sessions of the PSC.¹ Two sessions were held at the level of Heads of State and Government.² The convening of PSC sessions at such high-levels is indicative of the increasing high-level involvement of member states in shaping the agenda of the PSC and the significance that they attach to the particular agenda items of the PSC.

Compared to 2020, there has been more consistent rotation of the chairpersonship of the PSC in 2021, although this has not always followed the alphabetical order as provided by the Council's Working Methods. The map below shows the rotation of the monthly chairpersonship of the PSC

in 2021. The highest number of sessions that the PSC convened in a month was nine in May and October. The minimum session that the PSC held in a month was three. As in past years, on average the PSC held six sessions per month during 2021.

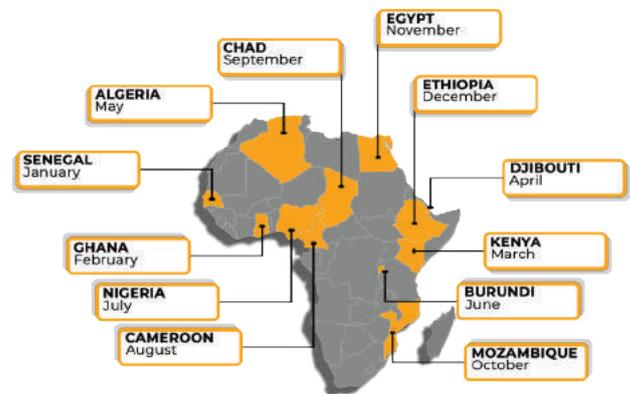


FIG 1: PSC CHAIRS OF 2021

While most of the conflict situations addressed in 2021 were a continuation of sessions convened in 2020, new situations not anticipated in the annual indicative program of the PSC of 2021 were also added in the course of the year. Such new items include the situations in Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, and Guinea. While the addition of Chad and Guinea to the agenda of the PSC was triggered by military coups, that of Comoros was as part of PSC's conflict prevention role and Ethiopia's was on account of the continuation and further deterioration of the war that erupted in Tigray region in November 2020.

It is also interesting to note that during 2021 the PSC removed Burundi from the list of items on its agenda.³ Burundi was on the agenda of the PSC following the eruption of the political crisis in the country in 2015. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) which has featured in Council's agenda annually since 2004 was not considered in 2021. The last time Council convened a session specifically on the situation in the DRC was in 2019.⁴ This could possibly activate Rule 7(3) of the PSC Rules of Procedure. On the other hand, during 2020 as well as 2021, the situation in the DRC was part of PSC's annual indicative agenda and was addressed as part of Council's sessions on the Great Lakes Region (GLR). PSC's 2022 annual indicative program also envisages DRC as part of its

¹ The following are list of PSC sessions held at ministerial level in 2021: 986th (18 March 2021), 987th (22 March), 997th (18 May), 998th (22 May), 999th (24 May), 1024th (19 August), 1035th (30 September), 1040th (22 October), 1048th (15 November), and 1055th (14 December).

² The two PSC sessions held at the level of Heads of State and Government are: 984th (9 March) and 1043rd (29 October).

³ Under Rule 7(3) of the PSC Rules of Procedure, the procedure for delisting of an item from the agenda of the PSC is laid down.

session on the GLR.



FIG2: PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF CONFLICT SITUATIONS ADDRESSED BY THE PSC IN 2021

In terms of conflict trends, the continent faced the continuation and in some cases deterioration of existing situations. These include conflict situations in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin (LCB), the Central African Republic (CAR), eastern DRC, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Libya. Beyond conflicts already on the agenda of the PSC in previous years, a concerning development in 2021 was the challenge of addressing new conflict situations and the spike in the occurrence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG), involving military coups.⁵ In this respect, situations that attracted particular attention in continental and international news and conflict resolution efforts during the year include the situation in the Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique and the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Worryingly, the expansion in the frequency and geographic scope of incidents of terrorist attacks has persisted during 2021, with highest number of incidents affecting the Central African and West African regions in particular.⁶

As the map in figure 2 above shows, the country and region-specific situations that featured on the agenda of the PSC in 2021 are concentrated in regions that have dominated the agenda of the PSC for the past several years. Yet, PSC's engagement on

⁵ Amani Africa's [Special Report on UCG](#) has more details on the trends observed during 2021 and the challenges to and means of strengthening AU norms banning UCG.

⁶ See Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the continental efforts in the prevention and combatting of terrorism, PSC/PR/RPT.1034 (2021), submitted to the 1034th meeting of the PSC in October 2021.

these situations were also driven by new dynamics. The military seizure of power in Chad, Mali, Guinea and Sudan triggered concerns about resurgence of coups and the reversal of progress achieved in the democratization process of the continent supported by AU norms due to the deepening democratic governance deficits on the continent.⁷ With the exception of Chad, the PSC has suspended all countries in line with the Lomé Declaration of 2000 and Art.7(g) of the PSC Protocol. In addition to committing a number of sessions to the situations on each of these countries, the PSC has also conducted a fact-finding mission to Chad and an evaluation mission to Mali to engage with relevant stakeholders and encourage handover of power to civilian-led authorities. The progress towards transfer of power from the juntas in all the four countries to civilian authorities continues to face resistance from the men in uniform, triggering serious political and constitutional crisis particularly in Sudan. Given the anticipated change in the membership of the PSC following the elections that will be held in February 2022, it remains to be seen how the PSC will follow up the challenge that the occurrence of UCG poses to well established AU norms and stability.

Unsurprisingly, terrorism and violent extremism was also a thematic issue which received increased attention of the PSC during 2021. Of the ten ministerial sessions convened during the year, three were committed to this item, one of these having a particular focus on the effect of withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya.

Somalia and AMISOM received the most attention in the PSC during the year. In total, eight sessions were committed to the situation in Somalia, out of which five specifically focused on consultations around the future of AMISOM post-2021.

Another notable trend in PSC's engagement during 2021 was its increased attention to the impact of natural disasters on peace and security, particularly climate change. Interestingly, while lack of consensus on the issue continues to bar the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) from adopting a

⁷ The resurgence of UCG in the continent was among the concerns addressed at the 8th High-Level Seminar. One of the key findings highlighted in that regard was the need for reviewing relevant frameworks and instruments including the 2000 Lomé Declaration on UCG, as to ensure that these frameworks are suitable to the contemporary peace and security landscape of the continent.

resolution on climate change,⁸ the PSC has adopted a communiqué that firmly and fully supports the ideas in the vetoed UNSC resolution on the topic, with particular focus on financing of adaptation.⁹

As in the previous years, while there is significant convergence between the items on the agenda of the PSC and situations of violent conflicts on the continent, there remain various situations that have not made it to the agenda of the PSC. It was also observed that some situations received more regular and sustained engagement from the PSC than other situations of equal or even higher gravity.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC IN 2021

Total Number of Sessions - 78				
Sessions without outcome documents - 10				
Sessions with outcome documents - 68				
Country Specific Sessions - 36				
North Africa	East & Horn of Africa	Central Africa	West Africa	Southern Africa
2 sessions	16 sessions	8 sessions	10 sessions	None
Thematic Sessions - 42				
APSA Tools and Pillars	Consultative Meetings	Specific Category of People	Election & Governance	General Themes
8 sessions	4 sessions	4 sessions	3 sessions	23 sessions

TABLE 1: 2021 SESSIONS OF THE AUPSC

The PSC had a total of 78 sessions in 2021 showing an increase of about ten percent from the previous year. Most of the sessions conducted during 2021 were anticipated in the annual indicative programme of the PSC. However, in comparison to previous years, more emergency sessions and/or new agenda items

⁸ Niger as President of the UNSC tabled for voting a landmark resolution on climate change and security which attracted the highest number of co-sponsorship from member states of the UN and yet was not adopted due to a veto by Russia. See Florian Krampe and Cedric de Coning, *Russia's 'nyet' does not mean climate security is off the Security Council agenda*, (13 December 2021) available on <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/expert-comment/2021/russias-nyet-does-not-mean-climate-security-security-council-agenda> and ICG, *How UN member states divided over climate security*, (22 December 2021) available on <https://www.crisisgroup.org/how-un-member-states-divided-over-climate-security>

⁹ See communiqué of the 1051st meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.1051 (2021) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1051th-meeting-of-the-au-peace-and-security-council-psc-held-on-26-november-2021-on-the-theme-climate-change-and-peace-and-security-the-need-for-an-informed-climate-security-development-nexus-for-africa> and for commentary on the significance of this outcome of the PSC meeting see Cedric de Coning, *African Union shows global leadership on the climate-peace nexus*, (20 December 2021) available on <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/african-union-shows-global-leadership-on-the-climate-peace-nexus/>

were introduced to Council's monthly programmes.

As Table 1 above indicates, out of the total sessions convened during the year, 46% were committed to conflict specific agenda items while 54% were on thematic agenda items. The convening of more thematic sessions over country specific sessions has been a noteworthy development in 2021, demonstrating tendencies in the PSC to engage more on thematic issues than specific conflict situations. Of the total sessions convened in 2021, 13% did not have publicly available outcome documents.¹⁰ As shown in the chart below, of the publicly available outcome documents, majority were communiqués, while there were also a few press statements and a joint-communiqué.

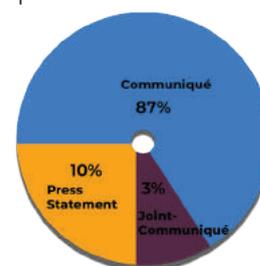


FIG3: TYPE OF OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PSC'S ACTIVITIES IN 2021



FIG4: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND NUMBER OF SESSIONS ON SITUATIONS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS¹¹

¹⁰ These include country specific sessions on the situation in Sudan convened on 16 March; situation in Mali convened on 24 May; situation in Comoros convened on 1 June; Consideration of report of AU Independent Assessment Team on the AU's engagement in and with Somalia post-2021 convened on 30 July; briefing on the August 18-19 meeting between the AU Commission and FGS convened on 31 August; and emergency session on the situation in Guinea convened on 6 September. From thematic sessions, the consideration of Common African Position on Financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) through UN Assessed Contributions convened on 21 July; session on strategic Priorities for the utilization of the AU Peace Fund and the consideration of the Zero Draft African Consensus Paper on the Financing of AU-led PSOs using UN assessed contributions convened on 5 October; Assessment of implementation of the PSC work plans 2020-2021: achievements, challenges and way forward convened on 19 October and PSC's joint meeting with the UN Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) convened on 11 November.

¹¹ Although PSC's formal session committed to Ethiopia was only one (the 1045th session), the Council also addressed the situation in Ethiopia under AOB at the 984th Summit Level meeting held on 9 March 2021.

As Fig4 above demonstrates, 42% of the Council's country/region specific sessions were committed to conflict situations in the East and Horn of Africa region, whereas situations in West Africa took 28%. Accordingly, as in the preceding years, the regional distribution of sessions demonstrate that majority of the conflict specific sessions were committed to situations in the East and Horn of region. With respect to situations in west Africa, while the situation in Mali and the Sahel continued to dominate, the regional crisis involving Boko Haram in the LCB has also received increased attention compared to 2020. The trend in PSC's engagement in the central and north regions have also largely remained similar to last year's.

Southern Africa has not received PSC coverage during 2021 despite the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Mozambique due to the upsurge in terrorist activities. It is however worth noting that the situation in northern Mozambique was part of PSC's initial monthly agenda for May 2021¹² but was later removed from the agenda.¹³

PSC ON THE SITUATIONS IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

PSC dedicated 16 sessions to address situations in East and Horn of Africa, making it a region that received the most attention in 2021 from the PSC. Like previous years, Somalia and Sudan continue to dominate the agenda of the Council in this region. Sessions on Somalia showed significant rise – from three to eight – while sessions on Sudan slightly decreased – from six to four – compared to 2020. In 2021, the PSC also undertook three field missions to the East and Horn of Africa region.

PSC convened only one session on South Sudan (the 990th session) to consider the report of a three-day field mission. This marks the lowest number of sessions on this situation since the Council's first

engagement on South Sudan in 2012. 2022 will be a delicate time for South Sudan, and as such, it is of significant interest for the PSC to closely follow up developments in the country. On one hand, the transitional period enters its final year in February 2022, and all pending provisions of the revitalized agreement (particularly Chapter II regarding security arrangement and Chapter V relating to transitional justice) need to be fully implemented. On the other hand, South Sudan has to make an orderly preparation for the general elections slated for 2023.

The Comoros was back on the agenda of the Council in 2021 after six years of hiatus.¹⁴ It is interesting to notice PSC's interest to support conflict prevention in the Comoros, which met twice in 2021 as part of its conflict prevention efforts.

The conflict in northern Ethiopia was a new situation in the region that made it to the agenda of the PSC in 2021, although it received attention only twice.¹⁵

COMOROS

During its 1001st session in early June, the Council requested the Commission to dispatch a Technical Early Response Mission (TERM) with the intent to establish facts and report back to the Council. The second session on the Comoros took place on 19 October 2021 (1039th session). This was the session at which the report of the TERM was considered. A major outcome of this session was the decision of the PSC to deploy an 'AU multi-dimensional mission'. The purpose of the mission is to support the Comoros in different sectors including Security Sector Reform (SSR), institutional and justice reforms, national dialogue and preparation for elections. It is expected that the PSC may have a follow up on the situation in Comoros in 2022 considering its proposed deployment of an AU multi-dimensional mission to the country.¹⁶

¹² See Amani Africa, [Insight on PSC's Programme of Work for May 2021](#), produced prior to the change of the scheduled plan for a session on the situation in northern Mozambique.

¹³ This was based on the request to allow the Southern African Development Community (SADC) take the lead (based on the principle of subsidiarity), particularly taking into account that SADC was also planning to convene before the end of May in order to discuss the possibility of a regional military intervention force to tackle the worrying situation in Mozambique.

¹⁴ The last time PSC discussed Comoros was in 2015, at its 545th session.

¹⁵ First, during the PSC Heads of State and Government meeting held on 9 March 2021, the situation featured as part of AOB during which Ethiopia made a statement providing update on the situation. The second was at the 1045th session of the PSC in November 2021. More details below.

¹⁶ This is also important given that Comoros is expected to assume the chairpersonship of the AU in 2023.

ETHIOPIA

In 2021, as noted above the PSC discussed the situation in Ethiopia only in two occasions,¹⁷ of which only one was substantive. The first time the PSC discussed the matter was during the summit level session convened on 9 March 2021 under AOB. In the statement Ethiopia delivered by way of providing update to the PSC, it expressed its readiness to work with AU's human rights body, the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) to undertake investigations jointly with the Ethiopian National Human Rights Commission, into the alleged human right violations in Tigray region.

However, the only formal and substantive session that specifically addressed the situation in Ethiopia was its 1045th emergency session. The session happened in the context of the spread of the conflict southward towards the capital after the fall of the strategic towns of Dessie and Kombolcha. Expressing its 'deep concern' over the escalation and expansion of the conflict, the Council, in that session, urged parties for an immediate cessation of hostilities and pursue political dialogue. Regarding alleged human right violations and abuses, the Council highlighted the imperative of ensuring an impartial, effective, transparent and prompt investigation into the alleged violations. In 2022, PSC session on this situation, if it will happen, is likely to be by way of update or briefing from the High Representative of the AU Commission for the Horn of Africa.

SOMALIA AND AMISOM

The PSC met eight times to discuss the situation in Somalia and AMISOM during the period under review, showing almost a threefold increase from last year. There were two major issues that led to such increased engagement by the PSC. The first was the deepening political instability due to contention over the delayed presidential election and intense power struggle pitting the president against Federal Member States and other political forces. The second was AMISOM's transition post-2021. The latter issue attracted increasing attention during the second half of the year.

¹⁷ PSC's engagement on the situation in Ethiopia is, of course, in sharp contrast with the UN Security Council, which addressed the situation (particularly its humanitarian aspect) ten times (See Security Council Report, *In Hindsight: The Security Council in 2021*, (28 December 2021) available on <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-01/in-hindsight-the-security-council-in-2021.php>).

On the political front, Somalia witnessed a renewed political turmoil for the most part of 2021 due to electoral impasse between political leaders. At its 978th session the PSC warned all Somali stakeholders to refrain from undertaking 'any unilateral or non-consensual measures' that might complicate further the political situation in the country. That warning of the PSC went unheeded and the House of the People (HoP) adopted a 'Special Law' on 12 April, subsequently signed into law by Somalia's President, triggering violent confrontation among various elements of Somali security forces.

Few days after the extension of the president's mandate through this 'Special Law' and the ensuing violent confrontation, the PSC convened its 993rd session to address the unfolding crisis. The Council came out with a strongly worded Communique condemning the unilateral act of the HoP and highlighting its possible impact over the cohesion of Somalia's federation as well as the unity of the security forces. This rejection by the PSC of the 'Special Law' and its affirmation of the September 2020 political agreement on the conduct of the elections in Somalia along with intense pressure from other international partners and formidable opposition by Somali actors forced the President and the HoP to reverse course by rescinding the decision to extend the President's mandate.

At the 993rd session, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the Commission to immediately appoint and dispatch to Somalia a High Representative. Though this was followed up by appointing former President of Ghana, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, the FGS rejected the appointment.¹⁸

The Council, at its 1037th session, expressed its concern over the political stand-off between the President and the Prime Minister in exacerbating the political and security situation as well as delaying the long overdue election and negotiation on the future of AMISOM.

¹⁸ It is to be recalled that the conclusions of PSC's latest retreat on its working methods (the Mombasa retreat held in late May 2021) highlighted the need for 'ensuring prior consultations between the Commission and the PSC' in the appointments of Special Representatives. Yet, Chad declined to receive the Senegalese Ibrahima Fall in June and Sudan was not also receptive of the deployment of the 'emissary' of the Chairperson of the Commission stipulated in the PSC decision that suspended Sudan after the coup of 25 October.

On the future of AMISOM, it was at the 978th session that the PSC mandated an 'AU-led Independent Assessment Team' for a comprehensive assessment of the way forward for a multidimensional AMISOM and the AU's overall engagement in and with Somalia beyond 2021.¹⁹ The PSC considered the report of the AU Independent Assessment Team for the first time at its 1015th session. Though no outcome document was issued, the consensus that members of the Council arrived at was to endorse the proposed 'AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilisation Support to Somalia' (Option 1 of the report), deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This position was reflected in the communique of PSC's subsequent session at its 1042nd meeting.²⁰

Meanwhile, the UNSC has taken a different position. Through Res2568/2021, a 'reconfigured' AMISOM, focused on enabling and supporting Somalia Security Forces (SSF) to take primary responsibility for security, has been recognized as the preferred option. In a context where the hybrid mission lacks backing from the host state as well as the UNSC, the PSC seemed to see little chance for the idea of hybrid mission to succeed. Accordingly, at its 1053rd meeting, though it still maintains the relevance of the hybrid mission as the best way to ensure sustainable and predictable financing for the mission, the PSC made a bold acknowledgement that 'any future mission to replace AMISOM must enjoy the support and consent of the FGS as well as the UN Security Council'. The Council further requested the Commission to continue its engagement with the FGS and the UN to agree on the nature of the follow-on mission. As the consultations continue, the UNSC has adopted Res2614/2021 on 21 December 2021 granting a mandate roll-over for AMISOM, for three months which will last until 31 March 2022. This followed the recommendation of this option by the PSC at its 1037th session.

¹⁹ This decision came at the backdrop of UNSC's undertaking of an independent assessment without involving AU, in disregard of the latter's request for an AU-UN joint leadership in conducting the assessment during its 923rd meeting convened in May 2020.

²⁰ The main consideration behind endorsing this option has been, apparently, to ensure a sustainable and predictable financing for the follow-on mission through UN assessed contributions. This option seems to be favoured by the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), but faced strong disapproval from FGS. The latter criticized the decision of the Council for not sticking to the original plan under the Somalia Transition Plan (STP) that makes ways for Somalia to assume full security responsibilities by 2022.

Given the lack of progress with respect to the conclusion of the election, the creation of stable relationship among the key Somalia actors and agreement on AMISOM's status post-2021, the PSC is sure to convene a number of sessions on Somalia and AMISOM in particularly in early 2022.

SUDAN

PSC's engagement on Sudan was low for the most part of 2021. In total, the PSC held four sessions on the situation in Sudan, mostly in the last quarter of the year. One of the sessions conducted during the year (on 16 March) did not have a publicly available outcome document. At its 990th session, Council considered the report of the its Field Mission to Sudan which took place from 30 March to 1 April 2021. One major area of concern for the Council at that session was the prevailing security challenges in Darfur following the withdrawal of UNAMID troops, and the 'infiltration and presence' of a holdout rebel group led by Abdul Wahid Nur movement in 'the camps of internally displaced persons (IDPs)'. Otherwise, the Council's reading of the political transition in Sudan had been largely positive at the time. However, tension began to build up in the run-up to the expected handover of the Sovereign Council's leadership to the Civilian authorities.²¹ Aborting the imminent transfer of the role of leading the Sovereign Council to civilian leadership and abrogating the Constitutional Declaration of August 2019, the military staged a coup on 25 October dissolving the civilian government and pushing the country into political turmoil.

On 26 October, the PSC convened an emergency session (1041st meeting) to consider the military coup in Sudan. In that meeting, the Council held its longest session that run for over seven hours and concluded the following day as members of the Council were unable to reach consensus on that day.²² The Council eventually agreed on suspending

²¹ According to the August 2019 Constitutional Declaration, the military chairs the Sovereign Council for the first 21 months and pass the baton to the civilian to lead the remaining 18 months.

²² Some members were of the view that a fact-finding mission should be dispatched first to assess the situation on the ground so that the findings of the mission would inform next step of the Council. It is to be recalled that this approach was followed in response to the April 2021 military seizure of power in Chad. Other members of the Council stood by the established norms and practices of AU and argued for the immediate suspension of Sudan, hence the final outcome.

Sudan with immediate effect and until the 'effective restoration of the civilian-led Transitional Authority'. Furthermore, the Council requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to 'immediately dispatch' to Sudan 'his emissary' to engage with the Sudanese stakeholders on necessary steps needed to expedite the restoration of constitutional order in Sudan. This has not been followed up due to Sudan's reluctance to receive the Chairperson's 'emissary'.

The 1050th session was convened against the backdrop of the 21 November 2021 agreement between Al Burhan, the Chairman of the Sovereign Council, and Prime Minister Hamdok. The agreement culminated in the reinstatement of Hamdok as Prime Minister and the continuation of the implementation of the political and constitutional declarations as a 'frame of reference' for transition in the country. Some members of the Council expected that these developments would have led to the lifting of the suspension of Sudan from the AU. The Council maintained the sanction, and even refrained from using terms expressing satisfaction over the steps taken by the military. Indeed, the deal that Prime Minister Hamdok signed with the military and his reinstatement did not reduce the political turmoil and the mass protests opposing the military. The opportunity for a successful transition hang in the balance. It is expected that this situation will continue to attract further peace-making and conflict resolution efforts, requiring PSC's engagement in 2022 including through undertaking the mission envisaged in the communique of its 1041st session.

PSC ON THE SITUATIONS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

As compared to 2020, PSC's focus on the central African region has increased, partly due to its engagement on the military seizure of power in Chad. In total, the PSC held eight of the sessions during the year focusing on the situations in the central Africa region. The PSC also undertook a field visit and a fact-finding mission to the region.

In addition to Chad, the PSC also considered Burundi, the CAR and the regional situation in GLR.²³

Despite the absence of a PSC session dedicated to the DRC, the country has continued to experience significant political, security and humanitarian challenges during 2021.²⁴

According to data recorded by the African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the central African region has also experienced the highest number of terrorist attacks in 2021.²⁵ At its 1010th session on LCB and its 973rd session on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the increase in trends and incidents of terrorism in central and west Africa was addressed by the PSC.

BURUNDI

Burundi was one of the agenda items of PSC's 993rd session. Significant progresses in the country's political and security situation since the outbreak of the 2015 political crisis were cited by Council in reaching its decision to remove Burundi from its agenda. In addition to the peaceful conclusion of the 20 May 2020 elections and the subsequent assumption of power by a new president, the improved relations of Burundi with neighbouring countries as well as multilateral partners; the gradual return of Burundian refugees from neighbouring countries; and Burundi's efforts towards economic recovery were highlighted in that regard.

The PSC also decided to end the mandate of the AU Commission on the Human Rights Observers (HROs)

²³ Not all situations involving conflicts in the region are on the agenda of the PSC. Cameroon continues to experience insecurity relating to the conflict in the Anglophone region which has marred the country since 2016. For details on developments regarding this situation see UN Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) of 1 June 2021 ([S/2021/517](#)) and 26 November 2021 ([S/2021/975](#)).

²⁴ According to various reports, DRC has experienced insecurity, human rights violations, violence related mass displacement, and humanitarian constraints throughout 2021. At the end of 2021, the situation in Eastern DRC prompted a joint military operation of the DRC and Uganda. The latest report of the UN Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) ([S/2021/987](#)) captures the political, security and humanitarian challenges. In its sessions on the GLR, the PSC has also emphasised the heinous crimes that continue to be committed by negative forces in the region. See for instance paragraph 7 of communiqué of the 994th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLXXIV) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-974th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-22-january-2021-on-the-situation-in-the-great-lakes-region>

²⁵ See Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the continental efforts in the prevention and combatting of terrorism, PSC/PR/RPT.1034 (2021), submitted to the 1034th meeting of the PSC in October 2021.

and Military Experts (MEs) mission which has been in deployment since PSC's authorisation in July 2015, at its 515th session. To draw lessons and good practices from the experiences of the mission, the PSC has requested the AU Commission to deploy a technical impacts assessment team to Burundi.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

In 2021, PSC convened two sessions on the situation in CAR. The first one was the 979th session which focused on the 27 December 2020 election which was completed successfully despite the outbreak of violence in some districts with the launch of attacks by a new armed alliance, the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) seeking to overthrow the government. In addition to noting the successful completion of the election, the PSC welcomed the final results of the Constitutional Court of CAR declaring President Faustin- Archange Touadéra as the winner of the presidential election and emphasised the need for all CAR parties to accept and adhere to the Court's decision to ensure respect to constitutionalism and rule of law.

The PSC also condemned the violent acts of the CPC, including the attempted coup of 13 January 2021. The PSC warned the coalition of possible punitive measures including targeted sanctions and criminal prosecution, which would extend to the coalition's head, former president François Bozizé.²⁶

In line with its decision at the 979th session, the PSC undertook a field visit to CAR from 27 June to 01 July. The Council's 1011th session was committed to consideration of the report of the field visit. The formation of a new government,²⁷ the appointment of a new Prime Minister and the establishment of a 'Special Commission of Inquiry' to address human rights and humanitarian law violations which took place particularly during the December 2020 election were welcomed as positive developments.

²⁶ Amani's [Insight of 16 February 2021](#) provides more details on how the CAR Government averted CPC's attempted coup of 13 January 2021, through intervention of UN troops and backing from Rwandan and Russian troops in addition to CAR's military.

²⁷ CAR's new government was established on 23 June 2021, comprising 32 ministers. Out of these, six come from armed groups signatories to the PAPR-CAR. Moreover, seven of the ministers appointed are women, representing 21.9%, which although fails to meet the 35% quota established under the gender parity law, is above the 14.7% representation of women in the previous government.

However, the PSC also expressed concern about the humanitarian situation exacerbated by the outbreak of Covi-19 pandemic, the continued violation of the 2019 Reconciliation in the Central Africa Republic (PAPR-CAR) – mainly by the CPC – and the capacity challenges of the country's defence and security forces partly due to the UN arms embargo imposed in line with UNSC Res2127/2013.²⁸

Although the PSC's field visit extended to the AU Military Observers Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA) which was deployed in line with the Council's authorisation at its 936th session, the PSC is yet to receive briefing on the activities of the mission in line with its request for regular updates at its 936th and 979th sessions.

While the PSC is sure to discuss the situation in the CAR, the number and frequency of sessions would depend on how the situation evolves during 2022.

CHAD

The PSC held three sessions on the situation in Chad at PSC's 993rd, 996th and 1016th sessions. The 993rd session was convened as an emergency meeting the day after the death of the late president Deby which was followed by power grab of the military. In a departure from the clear terms of applicable AU norms and PSC's own practice, the 993rd session did not see Chad suspended. Interestingly, not only did the PSC failed to suspend Chad as per the applicable AU rules, it also failed to refer to the situation as "coup", "military takeover of power" or "unconstitutional change of government" as it did in similar cases. Yet, the Council expressed concern over the formation of a Transitional Military Council (TMC) and called on Chadian stakeholders to embark on a process for *restoration of constitutional order* and urged the military to *hand political power over to civilian authorities*. The deployment of a fact-finding mission to Chad to engage stakeholders and provide

²⁸ When it comes to CAR's sanctions regime, including the Arms Embargo, most UNSC members have consensually agreed on the importance of allowing certain amendments as incorporated in Res2488/2019. However, there is division among UNSC members when it comes to further adjustments. China is in support of completely lifting the arms embargo whereas Russia supports making allowances for further adjustments if not complete lifting of the embargo. Other members of the Council, notably the P5, do not believe that in light of the current security and political situation in CAR, the government is ready to manage heavy weapons. Thus, they are against allowing further adjustments to the sanctions regime particularly on the arms embargo. Better coordination among the A3 States as well as between the PSC and A3 is one of the important steps that could perhaps ensure that PSC's position in this regard could influence the decision of the UNSC.

support in efforts to restore constitutional rule was also authorised at this same 993rd session.

Accordingly, in an unprecedented move a fact-finding mission involving the Chairperson and five members of the PSC itself (Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Ghana and Lesotho), the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) as well as representative of the Chairperson of the AU was conducted from 29 April to 5 May 2021. PSC's 996th session was committed to the consideration of the report of this fact-finding mission. At that session, despite the presence of breach of constitutional processes and a military grab of power, the PSC instead of suspending Chad limited itself to outlining conditions that need to be met by Chadian authorities.²⁹ The excuse was the delicate security situation in Chad. Chad's key position in AU's counter-terrorism efforts in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel regions also have influenced the Council's position.

In addition to setting out these conditions, the PSC also requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a Special Envoy and to set up an AU-led Support Mechanism (AUSM) for Chad at the 996th session. At the 1016th session, the PSC received updates on the progress of the AUSM and welcomed the appointment of Basile Ikouébé as AU Special Envoy.³⁰ It also noted some of the progress in Chad's political transition, in fulfilment of some of the conditions set at the 996th session including formation of a civilian transitional government, despite the fact that the head of the TCM remains the Head of State. On the other hand, PSC's demand that the Transitional Charter be revised to the effect of inclusion of clauses strictly limiting the transitional period to 18 months and barring members of the TMC from running in elections has as yet to be met.

The PSC is sure to have some follow up sessions for reviewing the transitional process in Chad during 2022.

²⁹ See communiqué of the 996th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/BR/COMM. (CMXCVI) (2021) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-993rd-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-22-april-2021-on-the-situation-in-the-republic-of-chad>

³⁰ Ikouébé is already the AU High Representative to Chad and Head of the AU Office in Ndjamena, as well as the preferred choice of Chad's MTC to provide support in the transition process. It is important to note that Ikouébé's appointment comes following the MTC's rejection of Senegalese Ibrahima Fall as AU's Special Envoy. On similar trends in Somalia and Sudan see note 15.

GREAT LAKES REGION (GLR)

On the regional situation in GLR, two sessions were convened during the year (the 974th and 1005th sessions). Both sessions served to amplify key initiatives which are crucial in facilitating stability and integration in the GLR. The Great Lakes Investment and Trade Conference, the confidence-building exercise among defence and security forces of the region, the UN Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework (UNGLRSF)³¹ and the launching of the contact and coordination group (CCG)³² were the main initiatives highlighted. In terms of concerns, PSC drew attention to the continued poorly regulated exploitation of natural resources and the proliferation of armed forces in the region, particularly in eastern DRC.

At the 974th session, the development of an Exit Strategy for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) was welcomed. The Exit Strategy is a joint roadmap of the Government of DRC and MONUSCO which elaborates benchmarks and minimum conditions which shall be met prior to the complete withdrawal of the mission. As MONUSCO commences its progressive withdrawal, the mission's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB)³³ has received additional troops from Kenya, a development welcomed by the PSC at its 1005th session. As MONUSCO proceeds with its gradual

³¹ More details on these initiatives can be found in Amani Africa's [January 2021 Monthly Digest on the AUPSC](#).

³² The CCG is mandated to oversee the implementation of non-military measures in order to eradicate negative forces in the region. It is an initiative which emerged from the agreement of Chiefs of Intelligence and Security Services in the GLR that consolidating peace and stability would require more than just military pressure. Following wide consultation among Chiefs of Military and Civilian Intelligence of countries in the region, operationalising the CCG was recommended at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Defence of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), on 14th October 2020. Accordingly, the CCG was launched in May 2021. Some examples of non-military approaches identified by the CCG at its launching event include providing support to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes of States in the GLR as well as identifying root causes of instability in the region and proposing measures to cut supply lines of negative forces, including recruitment and weapons.

³³ The FIB was formed by SADC, which has for long resisted involvement of non-members in the Brigade. South Africa, a significant troop contributing State to the FIB, has particularly been adamant about resisting proposals of reconfiguring the FIB as to allow replacing one of its three battalions with a composite of non-SADC States. So, it is unclear what framework Kenya's troop contribution falls under. Predictably, during its membership in the UNSC, South Africa was a strong proponent of maintaining the FIB, going against US's position that the Brigade should gradually be dissolved. As a non-permanent UNSC member that joined the Council in 2021, Kenya's troop contribution to the FIB could be indication that it will uphold the same position as South Africa. For SADC, Kenya's new position as a UNSC member could be an incentive for making concessions regarding reconfiguration of the Brigade.

phased down, the UNSC has renewed its mandate, along with the FIB, until 20 December 2022, under Res2612/2021 adopted on 20 December 2021.

PSC ON THE SITUATIONS IN THE WEST AFRICA REGION

In total, ten sessions were convened on the situations in the west African region. 70 percent of the sessions dedicated to the region were convened to address the situation in Mali and Guinea following the military coups. Unlike the case of Chad, the PSC upheld its norm on UCG and its established practice, suspending Mali and Guinea from all AU activities. In addition to its sessions, the PSC also undertook one evaluation mission to the region.

Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the security of the region, though the difficult political transition in Mali took much time of the Council in 2021. According to the ACSRT data, from 1 January to 30 June 2021, West Africa recorded 253 terrorist attacks resulting in 1,538 deaths—making West Africa the second hit region next to Central Africa. West and Central Africa together account nearly 90 percent of the total terrorist attacks in Africa. The increasing use of advanced technologies by terrorist groups and the link between transnational organized crimes and terrorism in the region have made the security landscape of West Africa and the Sahel more complex. Climate change adds another layer of complexity to the security situation of the region.

In 2021, the Council also renewed the mandate of MNJTF as well as G-5 Sahel for another one year at its 973rd and 1006th sessions, respectively. Beyond mandate renewal, the Council also assessed the security challenges facing the regions in which MNJTF and G-5 Sahel operate.³⁴ PSC's 1006th session also recognized the link between the security situation in Libya and the situation in the Sahel.³⁵

³⁴ For instance, during PSC's 973rd session, the Council expressed its high concern over the continued use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by Boko Haram in its reconnaissance operations. The huge influx of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) from the Middle East is believed to contribute in boosting the operational capability of terrorist groups in this region.

³⁵ The link came into the limelight particularly after a Chadian rebel group, allegedly involved in Libya's conflict, staged attack from Libya and killed Chad's late President Idriss Deby Itno. Against the backdrop of increasing security threat posed by the intended departure of foreign fighters from Libya, the Council convened a ministerial session in September 2021 (1035th meeting) to deliberate on what the departure means to the peace and stability of the Sahel and the rest of the continent. While the Council called for closer engagement between the

MALI AND THE SAHEL

PSC addressed the situation in Mali and the Sahel four times in 2021, showing lower PSC engagement compared to last year (9 sessions in 2020). Most of the PSC sessions focused on the fragile political transition, which came to a standstill after the second military coup. In a strange coincidence, the Malian army led by Assimi Goita staged the coup on the night of 24 May 2021, few hours after the conclusion of PSC's ministerial level session that was convened to consider the transition in Mali. No outcome document was released for that session, due to the unexpected turn of events in the country. As such, the PSC had to convene another session (1000th meeting, held on 25 May) a day after convening the ministerial session.

At its 1000th session, the PSC condemned the unlawful arrest of the and demanded the release of the President and Prime Minister of the transitional government and urged the military to refrain from interfering in the political process of Mali. In addition, the Council further demanded the military to 'create a conducive environment for an unimpeded return to the civilian-led transition' as well as facilitate the 'swift return to constitutional order'. Interestingly, the PSC put on hold its determination of whether UCG took place and the application of article 7(g) of the PSC protocol for suspending Mali.³⁶

At its 1001st session held on 01 June, the PSC decided to suspend Mali for UCG. In addition to suspending Mali from all AU activities, a major outcome was its decision to constitute a 'PSC evaluation mission to Mali' with the aim to identify AU's support to the transition process. Accordingly, the Council undertook an evaluation mission to Mali in mid-July, under the chairship of Nigeria. The report of the evaluation mission was considered and adopted during PSC's 1027th session. The PSC, among others, urged the transition government to work on an electoral calendar within the agreed 18 months

AU and UN in the development and implementation of the withdrawal plan of foreign forces from Libya, it also emphasized the withdrawal to be carried out in an 'orderly, coordinated and incremental' manner.

³⁶ At the time of PSC's 1000th session, ECOWAS was yet to consider the unfolding situation in Mali (ECOWAS met for the first time to consider the coup on 30 May 2021, hence five days after this session of the PSC). By refraining from invoking the application of Article 7(1)g, the Council might be allowing the regional bloc a space to take the lead in addressing the situation that occurred in its own yard. Indeed, the Council subsequently suspended Mali from AU during its 1001st session, following the steps of ECOWAS's decision to suspend Mali from the regional bloc on 30 May.

transition period. However, it appears that the transitional government has any intention to honour neither the 18 months transition nor the 27 February presidential election.³⁷

On the security front, although much of the focus had been on the political transition, some of PSC's meetings also tackled the security challenges of the region notably the 1006th session. The security situation in the Sahel has continued to worsen despite the presence of plethora of security arrangements operating within the region. While this shows the limitation of the security approach, it also raises the question of effectiveness and coordination. It is against this context that the Council, during its 1006th session, highlighted the importance of enhancing coordination and complementarity of efforts among all these forces. The Council also requested the Commission to dispatch a technical assessment mission to the region to make an overall assessment of the situation there including the impact of the drawdown of Operation Barkhane Force.³⁸

Two years after the Assembly's decision to deploy 3000 troops in the Sahel, the Council made little progress in 2021 to realize this initiative. Stabilization Strategy for the Sahel, a critical instrument to counter violent extremism and address root causes of the security challenges of the region, is yet to be finalized despite the Council's repeated request of the Commission for its finalization.

As in 2021, Mali and the Sahel is sure to continue to receive regular attention of the PSC in 2022 not only due to follow up of the process of transition from the military led rule to constitutional rule but also due to other sources of insecurity including inter-communal violence and the continuing threat of terrorism and violent radicalism in Mali and the wider Sahel region.

³⁷ ECOWAS has already taken a tougher stance on this by threatening to impose more sanctions at its 60th ordinary session, held in December 2021. In the months ahead, finding an agreeable timeline for the completion of Mali's transition is likely to be a thorny issue.

³⁸ Another major highlight of the year is Mali's alleged deployment of Russian Wagner group, a private security company, which drew wide criticism from western powers. In its December summit, ECOWAS expressed its concern over the 'risk for the region on the intervention of private security companies in Mali'. Wagner's involvement adds further complexity to the region marked by 'a security traffic jam', and how the PSC approaches this phenomenon remains to be seen.

GUINEA

In 2021, the PSC met three times to consider the situation in Guinea following the 5 September 2021 military coup. The Council convened an emergency session (1028th session) one day after the military removed President Alpha Conde from power, but no outcome document was issued for that session. ECOWAS, on the other hand, convened an extraordinary session on 8 September 2021, in which it suspended Guinea from the regional bloc. In a meeting subsequently held on 10 September (1030th session), the PSC endorsed the Communiqué adopted by the extraordinary session of ECOWAS. The Council further decided to immediately suspend Guinea from all AU activities until the restoration of constitutional order in the country. Although the Council also agreed to undertake an assessment mission to Guinea, a more active diplomatic engagement has been observed from ECOWAS with the AU seemingly taking more of a supportive role to the initiatives of the regional bloc.

In less than a month, the Council met again on 5 October (1036th session) to receive update on the situation. This session happened on the heels of another extraordinary session of ECOWAS on Guinea that took place on 16 September 2021. The PSC 'fully endorsed' the communiqué adopted by the Extraordinary session of the regional bloc, which particularly set six months as the time limit for the transition. However, Guinean authorities have failed to rollout a timetable for the return of constitutional order four months after the coup. And, whether PSC and/or ECOWAS are going to impose more sanctions or extend the duration of the transition is unclear at the time of finalizing this review.

Guinea will continue to feature on the agenda of the PSC in 2022 until the return of the country to constitutional order.

NORTH AFRICA

In total, two sessions were dedicated to situations in the north African region. Libya and Western Sahara were the two agenda items addressed by the PSC from this region. While a ministerial session was committed to the situation in Libya, Western Sahara was discussed at the level of Heads of State and Government. Although the PSC did not undertake

any field visits to this region, the 8th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa was held at the ministerial level, from 2 to 4 December 2021, in Oran, Algeria, the city where the high-level seminar was first launched.

LIBYA

The situation in Libya was addressed at PSC's 997th ministerial session. A major positive development welcomed was the approval of the composition of the Government of National Unity (GNU), which was formed in March 2021, assuming responsibility for leading the country to elections. Unlike the Government of National Accord (GNA) which lacked recognition from the parliament, the newly formed GNU has been endorsed by majority of representatives in parliament. Also taking note of the agreement reached on the timeline for conducting presidential and parliamentary elections – 24 December 2021 – the PSC called on all stakeholders to finalise the necessary constitutional frameworks for holding the elections by the UNSC prescribed deadline of 1 July 2021 and requested the AU Commission to deploy an election observation mission to Libya.

However, divisions within the LPDF have made it difficult to reach agreement on the constitutional basis for elections. With an agreed constitutional basis absent, a law on presidential elections was issued through decree by the Speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR) on 8 September 2021. While the procedural controversy surrounding this law has been one of the reasons for the postponement of the elections, the candidature list for the presidential election has been another major contributing factor, particularly the registration of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of former leader Muammar Gaddafi, who has been convicted in absentia for war crimes.

PSC also drew attention to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, especially the devastating impact of Covid-19 pandemic on migrants and refugees hosted in the country and reiterated its call for dismantling detention centres in Libya which are hosting migrants. The PSC is expected to convene a few sessions in 2022 on Libya to deal with both the election process and the withdrawal of foreign fighters as well as the dignified treatment of migrants in Libya.

WESTERN SAHARA

The 984th session of the PSC convened at the Heads of State and Government level had two agenda items, one of which was a follow up on the implementation of paragraph 15 of the decision of the 14th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV)), which relates to the situation in Western Sahara. Paragraph 15 of Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV) called on the PSC to engage the Kingdom of Morocco and Saharawi Republic regarding the growing tensions over Western Sahara and to prepare conditions for a new ceasefire.

Having noted with concern the resumption of armed confrontations between Morocco and Saharawi Republic in violation of *Military Agreement Number 1*, the PSC adopted five key decisions at the 984th session, with the aim of facilitating definitive resolution to the dispute. The decisions are: (1). for the AU Troika to urgently revitalize engagement with Morocco and Sahrawi; (2). for the PSC to discharge its mandate on the Western Sahara conflict by reviewing the situation, at the level of Heads of State and Government and through briefings from the AU Troika; (3). for the PSC to request Morocco and Saharawi Republic to immediately cease hostilities and engage in dialogue; (4). for the PSC to request AU Commission to urgently take necessary steps for the re-opening of the AU Office in Laayoune, Western Sahara; and (5) for the PSC to undertake a field visit to the region, as soon as possible.

The first two of these decisions rely on the operationalisation of the AU Troika Mechanism on Western Sahara. While the mechanism was established at the 31st Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, an inaugural meeting of AU Troika is yet to be convened, efforts made to convene the meeting on the side-lines of the 2019, 2020 and 2021 AU Summits failed for varied reasons.

THEMATIC ISSUES

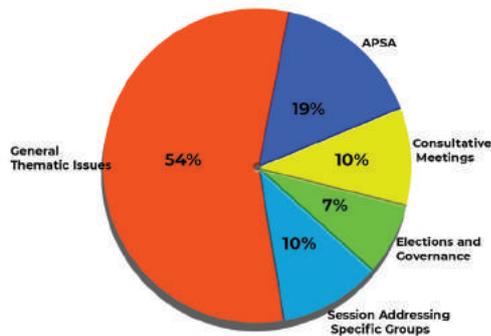


FIG 5: DISTRIBUTION OF THEMATIC SESSIONS

As captured in Table 1, the PSC had 42 thematic sessions in 2021, a substantial increase compared to the 27 such sessions the previous year. Moreover, during 2020, the PSC was unable to conduct field visit due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic³⁹ while in 2021, it has conducted five such visits. During the year, the PSC was also able to convene the 13th Retreat on its working methods.

SESSIONS ON SPECIFIC GROUPS

Deliberations on peace and security issues relating to women; children; youth and refugee and IDPs form part of PSC's standing thematic agenda items. In 2021, the PSC has held one session on protection of children in conflict situations in Africa; one session on the plight of refugees and IDPs and two sessions relating to women, peace and security (WPS). However, a session on youth, peace and security was not convened during the year.

Protection of children in conflict situations was one of the agenda items addressed at PSC's 994th session. Council paid specific attention to the increasing trend in abduction of children from, attacks on and occupation of schools in situations of armed conflicts. Council's request for the AU Commission to institutionalise a child protection architecture within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was one of the key decisions adopted at the

session.⁴⁰ Another key decision was the Council's request for the AU Commission to develop a matrix for monitoring and evaluation of decisions adopted by Council as well as the AU Assembly with regards to protection of children affected by armed conflicts.⁴¹

The plight of refugees and IDPs was addressed at PSC's 1002nd session, which was an open session. A central focus of the session was the high level of food insecurity among displaced people. In light of that, the AU Commission was requested to identify how food insecurity among refugees and IDPs can be addressed, working in collaboration with relevant international organisations. A major point emphasised at the session was also the need to boost Africa's readiness to respond to complex emergencies by replenishing the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF) as well as operationalising the African Humanitarian Agency (AUHA).⁴²

The two sessions committed to WPS were the 987th and 1052nd sessions. The 987th session was convened at the ministerial level and under the specific title, "women, peace, culture and gender inclusivity in Africa", magnifying the link between the WPS agenda and AU's 2021 theme, "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want". The session mainly looked into the achievement of women's engagement in peace processes through the effective utilisation of culture and arts that embrace and display women's participation and contribution in society.

⁴⁰ At its previous sessions on the theme, Council has reiterated the importance of mainstreaming child protection throughout all AU activities. Notably, at its 757th session which took place in 2018, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to establish a child protection architecture mandated to mainstream rights and welfare of children throughout various processes of AU decision-making. The recent request for institutionalising a child protection architecture within APSA is a more specific request, focusing on mainstreaming child protection concerns throughout the various phases of intervention – conflict prevention to mediation and management as well as PCRD efforts. In terms of implementing this request, a key starting point could be finalising the 'AU Policy on Mainstreaming Child Protection in the APSA' as recommended in the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)'s recent study, 'Stock take of the African Union Responses to Child Protection in Conflict Situations', which the PSC also welcomed at its 994th session.

⁴¹ The development of such matrix would significantly contribute to tracking progress obtained and challenges encountered so far in the implementation of important decisions including Council's request since 2014 (at its 434th session), for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a Special Envoy on Children in conflict situations. This call has also been reiterated by the AU Assembly at its 32nd Ordinary session. Yet no clear progress has been noted in translating this call into action.

⁴² The proposed finalisation and operationalisation of the AUHA was also one of the thematic issues addressed during 2021. At its 1025th session, Council received updates on the process of operationalisation of the AUHA, which included the development of the agency's draft Statute. It was proposed by the PSC that the draft structure of the AUHA be submitted to the Executive Council in February 2022 for adoption.

³⁹ There was one field visit that the PSC undertook in February 2020 before the disruption that COVID19 triggered since March 2020.

The 1052nd session was dedicated to commemoration of the 21st anniversary of UNSC Res1325/2000 on WPS. One of the central points highlighted at this year's commemoration of Res1325/2000 was the resilience displayed in engaging on the WPS in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to sustained endeavours in promoting the WPS agenda, the development of "Gender responsive guidelines for COVID-19 responses and the Post COVID-19 recovery" by the AU Commission was highlighted in that regard.

ON THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)

Excluding the various sessions convened on PSOs already addressed under respective country/regional situations, eight sessions were convened in 2021 relating to various pillars of the APSA.

2021's first APSA related session was the 986th ministerial meeting which focused on emerging challenges and critical lessons for sustainability of AU PSOs. Drawing attention to various emerging threats to peace and security, Council underscored that the main issue challenging AU PSOs' response to these challenges is inadequacy as well as lack of predictability and sustainability of funding. In line with Council's request for the AU Commission to develop a 'common African position paper on funding of AU PSOs and accessing UN assessed contributions', a zero-draft position paper was under developed and the PSC was updated on the same in July and October (there was no outcome document from these sessions by way of a communique or statement).

The second APSA related session was Council's 1007th meeting which addressed the operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Continental Logistics Base (CLB). Progress obtained in the operationalisation of the ASF, including the establishment and initial operationalisation of the CLB was welcomed. In terms of concerns, Council drew attention to the dwindling support of member States for operationalising the ASF.⁴³ In terms of

requests, the AU Commission was requested to finalise the proper structure and financing model of the CLB and the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) was requested to consider staffing requirements for the CLB as a specialised mechanism within the ASF. The PSC Military Staff Committee (MSC) was also tasked to work with the AU Commission on finalising the draft MoU on Deployment and Employment of the ASF.

Council's 1014th session on early warning and continental security outlook was another APSA related session convened during the year. The session served to succinctly articulate the varied new and existing threats to peace and security in Africa. Exemplifying Council's growing attention to terrorism displayed throughout 2021, it also requested to receive updates on the implementation status of para.18 of its 687th Communiqué, which requests AFRIPOL, CISSA and ACSRT to develop a 5-year strategic roadmap for prevention and combating terrorism and violent extremism.

The 1017th and 1047th sessions relating to the APSA addressed PCRCD efforts in Africa. Both sessions focused on the need for PCRCD efforts to adopt to new and emerging challenges including terrorism and influx of FTFs as well as climate change and public health emergencies. At the 1017th session, the PSC renewed its call for the reactivation of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRCD and its request for the AU Commission Chairperson to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the AU PCRCD activities. The 1047th session which was convened as part of the PCRCD awareness week conducted from 7 to 14 November 2021, welcomed the inauguration of the AU PCRCD Centre – which has been officially launched as of 21 December 2021.

The last APSA related session convened during 2021 was PSC's 1024th meeting on border governance which was held at the ministerial level. As a key finding of the session, the absence of a division which deals with the AU Border Programme within the PAPS Department was noted. Accordingly, the

Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC). Although the later was established as a temporary force until the ASF is fully capacitated to carry out rapid responses, it was never deployed. Nonetheless, ACIRC's existence alongside the ASF created the perception of duplicated efforts. At the 1007th session, Council drew attention to the decision of the AU Assembly at its 14th Extraordinary Session (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XIV)) to dissolve the ACIRC. This Assembly decision could perhaps contribute to reviving some of the support from the side of member States and allow all efforts to be refocused on the ASF.

⁴³ One of the main reasons behind the dwindling States' support for operationalising the ASF has been the existence of a parallel mechanism – the African

PSC recommended for the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government to consider dedicating such structure as part of the PAPS Department via the Executive Council.

Mandate renewals and extensions of PSOs and peacekeeping missions adopted by the PSC during 2021 are also captured in the table below.

Mandate Renewals	
AMISOM	Mandate renewed for a period of eight months from 11 May 2021 [at PSC's 994th meeting] – mandate on technical roll-over following 31 December 2021
G5-Sahel	Mandate renewed for a period of one year, starting from 13 July 2021 [at PSC's 1006th meeting] - expiring on 13 July 2022
MNJTF	Mandate renewed for a one year period starting from 31 January 2021 [at PSC's 973rd meeting] – expiring on 31 January 2022

TABLE 2: MANDATE RENEWALS

CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

The third annual consultative meeting between the PSC and ACHPR was convened at Council's 1019th session. ACHPR's study on Transitional Justice was welcomed at the meeting. In terms of collaboration between the two organs, the importance of fully operationalising the coordination modalities envisaged in the 866th Communiqué of their inaugural meeting was emphasised. In addition to calling on member States to cooperate with the ACHPR in the implementation of its mandates, the PSC also encouraged member States to consider the guidelines provided under ACHPR Resolution 449 in dealing with human rights issues emanating from their response to Covid-19 pandemic.

The 15th Joint Annual Consultative meeting of the AUPSC and UNSC was convened on 17 December. The issues addressed at the meeting were the future of AMISOM post-2021, the situation in the Sahel region, support to Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s Mission to Mozambique (SAMIM) and combating terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Prior to the consultative meeting, members of the two Councils also held their 6th Joint Informal Seminar on 16 December where they exchanged views on predictable and sustainable financing for AU-led PSOs through AU and UN contributions, including UN assessed contributions.

The second annual consultative meeting between the PSC and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) was convened on 26 August. It is to be recalled that the inaugural meeting was convened in 2019 where pertinent decisions were made with regards to adopting a collaborative approach between the two levels in responding to crises on the continent. In addition to serving as an opportunity to emphasise the need to expedite implementation of decisions adopted at the inaugural meeting, the second consultative meeting also led to the adoption of additional measures for the harmonisation and institutionalisation of collaboration between the two levels.⁴⁴

ELECTION AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

In 2021, the 976th, 982nd and 1034th PSC sessions addressed election related issues. The 976th session welcomed "AU Guidelines on Elections in Africa in the Context of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and Other Public Health Emergencies". It was decided by the PSC that member States shall provide their inputs on the Guideline before its submission to the PRC. The other two sessions were for consideration of reports of the AU Commission Chairperson on elections in Africa. The first report on elections held from July to December 2020 was considered at the 982nd session while the 1034th session considered the report of the Chairperson providing update on elections held from January to June 2021.

GENERAL THEMATIC ISSUES

Standing agenda items relating to humanitarian issues and natural disasters, amnesty month as well as counter terrorism efforts in Africa were addressed by the PSC during 2021. Themes such as 'Genocide and Hate Crimes' and 'Peace and Security and Development' which did not feature in Council agenda during 2020 were also addressed in 2021.

As indicated in the major highlights, 'terrorism

⁴⁴ See joint-communicé of the 2nd annual consultative meeting of the PSC and RECs/RMs, AU Doc PSC/RECs/RMs/2. (2021) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/joint-communicé-of-the-2nd-annual-consultative-meeting-between-the-peace-and-security-council-and-the-regional-economic-communities-and-regional-mechanisms-for-conflict-prevention-management-and-resolutions>

and violent extremism' was a theme that received increased attention during 2021. With a focus on the projected impact of the withdrawal of foreign fighters from Libya, the 1035th session emphasised the importance of proper management of the withdrawal of these forces in order to prevent the spread of terrorism to other parts of the continent, particularly the Sahel region. At the 1040th session, the report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on continental efforts in preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism was considered. Noting the concerning trends and rates in incidents of terrorist attacks and expansion of violent extremism highlighted in the report, the PSC specified key decisions adopted so far in the framework of combating terrorism and urged for their expeditious implementation. The 1048th session had a more specific focus on countering radical and extremist ideologies in Africa which lay the foundation for the spread of terrorism.

In addition to ICRC's yearly briefing which took place at Council's 1022nd session, the 1025th session on the AUHA was among PSC's sessions dealing with humanitarian issues. On natural disaster related concerns, the 984th session convened at the level of Heads of State and Government addressed the impacts of climate change on peace and security in Africa and among others adopted a decision on the establishment of an AU Special Fund for Climate Change. The 1051st session was also committed to climate change while the 1043rd session, also convened at the Heads of State and Government level, addressed disaster management in Africa with emphasis on impacts of climate change on peace and security. The number as well as level of sessions convened on natural disasters during the year demonstrates PSC's growing attention to the impacts of such disasters on peace and security in the continent.

While sessions specifically dedicated to Covid-19 pandemic clearly decreased as compared to 2020, the concern was addressed through other thematic and country specific sessions. The 998th and 1019th sessions also addressed the issue of Covid-19 vaccine access in Africa.

RETREAT

The 13th Retreat of the PSC was conducted in Mombasa, Kenya, from 27 to 29 May 2021 and the Conclusions of the retreat were adopted at PSC's 1004th session. The Retreat served the main purpose of reviewing and further strengthening PSC's working methods. Moreover, issues relating to early warning, elections in member States and priorities for utilisation of the AU Peace Fund were also discussed. In addition, the PSC Committee of Experts also convened on the margins of the Retreat to finalise the "Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030".

The PSC has also held its first joint retreat with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) from 19-21 December 2021 in Durban. The retreat was conducted in line with PSC decision of 914th and 962nd sessions. The two bodies focused on issues related to early warning, preventive diplomacy and addressing root causes of conflicts.

FIELD VISITS

Despite the continued challenges imposed by Covid-19 pandemic, PSC has been able to resume the conduct of field visits. It undertook such visits to CAR, South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. The PSC also sent a fact-finding mission to Chad as well as an evaluation mission to Mali in 2021, which were both initiated in response to a military takeover of power in both countries. Similar mission was envisaged for Sudan, but did not take place in 2021.⁴⁵ As such, these missions initiated in response to occurrence of UCG are qualitatively different from the ordinary field missions of the PSC. The table below captures the main details of field visits conducted during the year.

Country	Date	Chair	Main focus of the mission
CAR	27 June to 1 July	Burundi	Conducted in line with the decision of the 979th session, to follow up on the situation and show of solidarity with the government and people of CAR.
Chad	29 April to 5 May	Djibouti	A fact-finding mission conducted to engage Chadian authorities on the post-21 April coup situation, to support the investigation into the killing of the late President and ascertain efforts to restore constitutionalism.
Mali	14 to 17 July	Nigeria	To engage Malian stakeholders and identify areas for AU support on implementation of transitional activities.
Somalia	8 to 10 November	Egypt	To gather information regarding the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic situation and engage in dialogue with FGS and other relevant stakeholders, regarding AU's future engagement in Somalia.
South Sudan	24 to 26 March	Kenya	To gather first-hand information regarding the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation and to follow-up on the implementation of the R-ARCSS.
Sudan	30 March to 1 April	Kenya	To gather first-hand information regarding the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation and to follow-up on the implementation of the 2018 Constitutional Declaration and the Juba Peace Agreement.

TABLE 3: PSC FIELD VISITS AND OTHER MISSIONS IN 2022

⁴⁵ See communiqué of the 1041st meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.1041 (2021) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1041th-meeting-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-held-on-26-october-2021-on-the-situation-in-sudan>, and communiqué of the 1050th meeting of the PSC, AU Doc PSC/PR/COMM.1050 (2021) available on <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-1050th-meeting-of-the-au-peace-and-security-council-psc-on-the-situation-in-the-sudan>



MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

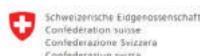
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research; training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African Union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amani Africa wishes to express its gratitude to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the support in the production of this review. We also thank the Government of Switzerland, the Embassy of Germany, the Embassy of Ireland, and Open Society Foundations for the additional support.



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